



Media Release

**US Army Corps
of Engineers
Kansas City District**

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Missouri River opens for shortened navigation season

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Towboats and barges continue to make their way up and down the muddy waters of the Missouri River thanks to the reopening of a 200-foot wide navigable channel maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The river was deemed open for navigation April 1 after Corps reconnaissance boats found the river channel at least 8-foot deep.

The U.S. Coast Guard is expected to complete buoy placement marking the channel by week's end.

Opening of the navigation season comes after releases were increased from Gavins Point Dam in late March. Releases averaged 14,700 cfs in March, compared to a long-term average of 20,700 cfs, to help conserve water in the big upstream reservoirs.

Maintaining a navigable channel continues to be important this year, as construction of a 750 Megawatt power plant continues near Council Bluffs.

Major pieces of the plant are too large to move via rail or road, and reengineering the plant to accommodate other methods of transportation would have meant a reduction of nearly 200 megawatts of annual production from the plant.

That reduction would equate to nearly \$60 million in lost revenues annually.

River flows are expected to continue at minimum service levels throughout the season, a move that is expected to shorten the season by 53 to 61 days, depending on runoff.

A final determination on the season length will be made July 1 after the Corps reviews the storage level in upstream reservoirs.

The Corps will host a public meeting in Kansas City at 7 p.m. April 13 and the Hilton Kansas City Airport, 8801 NW 112th Street, to discuss the 2005 plan for regulating the dams and reservoirs. The meeting is one of six being hosted throughout the Midwest next week to discuss river operations.

For more information on Missouri River operations, contact Paul Johnston (503) 808-3710.

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